Utilizing Community Infrastructure to Meet Individual Needs: Mental Health
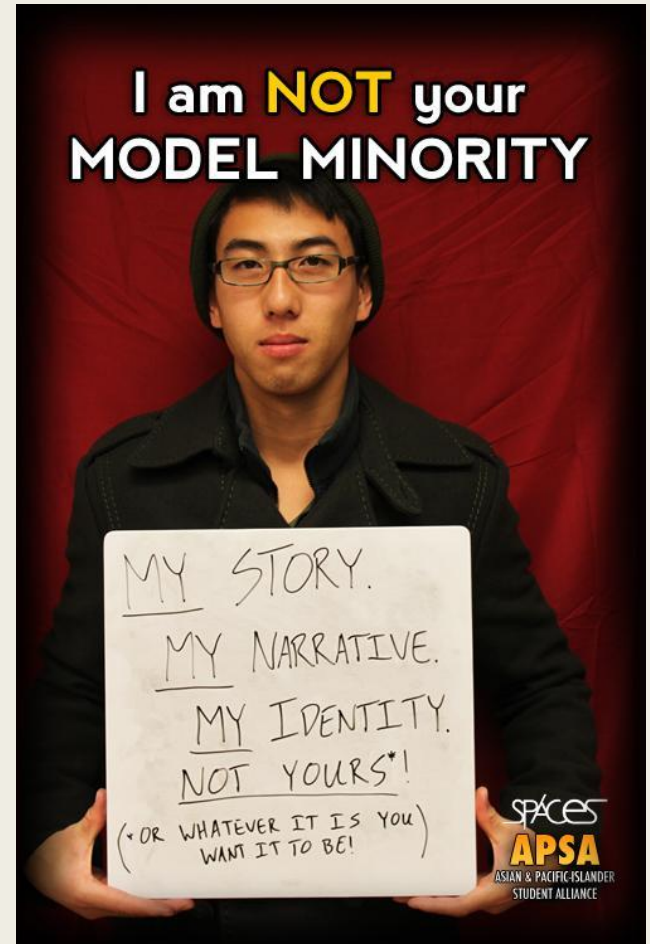
Suraj Arshanapally
Yale University

Objectives

- To inform individuals about Asian Americans and their societal experiences

- To outline the intersection between society and mental health

- To elaborate on the cultural barriers to mental health resources faced by Asian American communities

- To define mental health care in the context of four major Asian religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism

Asian Americans and Society

- Model Minority Myth

- Studies demonstrated Asian Americans are victims of racism and discrimination

- Examples: verbal abuse, physical abuse, race-related threats and harassment, and various forms of school bullying

https://67.media.tumblr.com08e1d5915ed93aa31f2f1db 781ee8a3/tumblr_mgls4yfPNa1qgb5ceo1_500.jpg

Psychosocial Determinants of Mental Health

- Mental Health - condition of being mentally and emotionally sound and well adjusted, characterized by the absence of mental disorder or by adequate adjustment[1]

- Past studies have identified a positive association between racial discrimination and poor mental health outcomes[2,3,4,5]

Cultural Barriers to Mental Health Access

- Cultural stigmatization of mental health

- Language barriers and ineffective communication

- Lack diversity and don't meet Asian American needs

- Inadequate data and research on Asian Americans

http://www.jim.fr/e-docs/00/02/67/F4/carac_photo_1.jpg

Religion: Mental Health Service

COMMUNITY   **SPIRITUAL HEALTH**   **WORLDVIEW**

Religious Centers   *Prayer*   *Identity Formation*

Social Support   *Yoga*   *Motivation*

Stress Coping   *Meditation*

Field Research:

Saint Louis, Missouri

Four Asian Religious Services in St. Louis, MO

HINDUISM

Community
3 Temples

Spiritual Health
Prayer, yoga and meditation services

Worldview
1 center for cultural and religious education

BUDDHISM

Community
14 Temples

Spiritual Health
Prayer, yoga, meditation, sitting group, and spiritual healing services

Worldview
Few sitting groups that discuss culture and religion

SIKHISM

Community
1 gurudwara

Spiritual Health
Prayer

Worldview
1 Sikh study circle that discusses culture and education

JAINISM

Community
1 shrine

Spiritual Health
Prayer

Worldview
No St. Louis specific religious or cultural education services

Limitations to Utilizing Religious Infrastructure

Sikh Gurudwara, St. Louis, MO

- Lack of data on Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs in St. Louis

- Access of religious centers

- Different religious practices (i.e. people who identify as Hindu, but do not utilize temple services)

- Buddhist communities - various culturally-specific resources as opposed to religiously-specific

Hindu Temple, St. Louis, MO

References

[1]Mental Health Connection. (n.d.). Glossary of Mental Health/Mental Illness Terminology. Retrieved April 20, 2016, from http://www.mentalhealthconnection.org/pdfs/glossary.pdf

[2]Jones, D. R., Harrell, J. P., Morris-Prather, C. E.., Thomas, J., & Omowale, N. (1996). Affective and physiological responses to racism: The roles of afrocentrism and mode of presentation. *Ethnicity and Disease,* 6, 109-122.

[3]Fernando, S. (1983). Racism as a cause of depression. *International Journal of Psychiatry, 3,* 41-49.

[4]Odom, E. C., & Vernon-Feagans, L. (2010). Buffers of Racial Discriminination: Links With Depression Among Rural African American Mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72 (2),* 346-359. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00704.x

[5]Branscombe, N. R., Schmitt, M. T., & Harvey, R. D. (1999). Perceiving pervasive discrimination among African Americans: Implications for group identification and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77(1),* 135-149. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.77.1.135